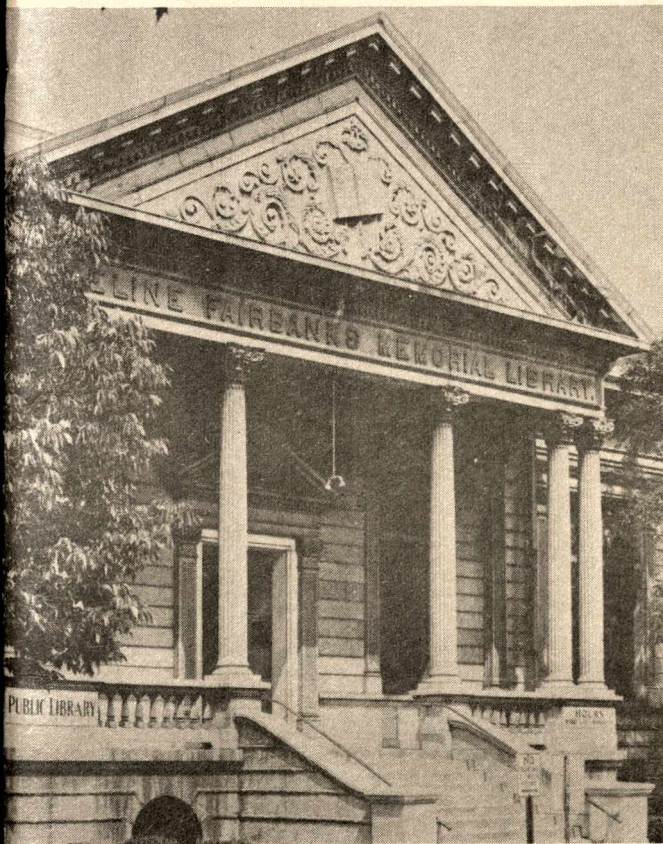


*Libraries (TH) VCPL*

# EMELINE FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY



*SIXTY  
YEARS  
OF  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
SERVICE  
IN  
TERRE  
HAUTE,  
INDIANA*

*1906 - 1966*

Community Affairs File  
Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

**A HISTORY OF  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
SERVICE IN  
TERRE HAUTE AND  
VIGO COUNTY, INDIANA  
FROM 1823 TO 1966**

**By  
Mrs. Frances Boyd,  
Technical Services Department**

**FAIRBANKS-VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
Serving Terre Haute & Vigo County  
222 North 7th Street  
Terre Haute, Indiana**

1823-1906

When Mr. Chauncey Rose arrived in Terre Haute nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, a few log cabins were the only buildings in the town, and the entire *library* consisted of the Bible and Almanac.

Like Mr. Rose, many early settlers thought that books were a necessary part of life, and that a reading community was very likely to be a moral and religious community. It was this thinking which had caused the Indiana fathers to try to organize libraries at a very early stage in Indiana's history.

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention at Corydon in June of 1816 had inserted into Indiana's first constitution the provision that ten per cent of the proceeds of the sale of town lots in county seats was to be set aside for the support of public libraries.

By 1823 Terre Haute was one of the towns which had established a library. This first effort, a subscription library, had John Britton as its librarian and W. C. Linton as president of the board of trustees. James J. Farrington, Curtis Gilbert, William Clark, Nathaniel Huntington, D. H. Johnson, D. F. Durkee and George Hussey were the members of the board.



The Western Register and Terre Haute Advertiser, July 21, 1823 ran the following notice concerning this library:

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NOTICE.

*THE Citizens of the county of Vigo,  
are respectfully informed that the*

*PUBLIC LIBRARY*

*is open for their perusal, by their  
complying with the regulations of  
the institution--where due attention  
will be paid to the issuing and re-  
turning of Books, each day in the  
week, (Sundays excepted) between the  
hours of 10 and 12 A.M. and 2 and 4  
P.M. at my office in Terre Haute.*

*JOHN BRITTON, LIBRARIAN*

*July 21, 1823*

*ltf*

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This library failed financially, however, and finally ceased to exist, so that libraries in Terre Haute before 1850 were those contained in the private collections of prominent and professional citizens of the town.

John Parsons, who traveled through Indiana in the 1840's, tells about the library of "considerable size and merit" which belonged to Dr. Ezra Read. Dr. Read's patients were allowed to read such volumes as "John Smith's Letters with 'Picters' to to Match," and "L'Abri, or the Tent Pitch'd," while waiting for the doctor.

J. Richard Beste, an Englishman who wrote a description of his travels in the "backwoods of America," and spent some time in Terre Haute where he was detained because of illness in 1851, also mentions Dr. Read's library. According to Beste, Dr. Read was recommended to him as holding "the highest rank in public estimation." Beste says, "Dr. Read was the most perfect classical scholar in those parts, and always carried about with him the Iliad, in Greek, as a pocket companion." Dr. Read's library appears to have given borrowing privileges to certain selected borrowers, such as Beste.

During these years of the development of Terre Haute from a pioneer village to an incorporated city, a free public library was a dream to which the inhabitants gave lip service, but apparently very little financial backing. Nevertheless, although the records consist mostly of notices and advertisements in newspapers and city directories, the subject of a public library was not allowed to be forgotten.

In 1853 a law was passed for the organization of township libraries throughout the state, and the Harrison Township Library came into being at 318 Ohio Street. While Mr. I. M. Brown was librarian, the Township Library was moved to the Union Printing Office, Market Street, Rutledge's Building (upstairs). Mr. Brown, who was also the publisher of the Daily and Weekly Union, placed this notice in the Terre Haute City Directory in 1858: "Harrison Township Library, furnished by the Township for the free use of the citizens at the Union Printing Office."



Also available to the residents at the Union Printing Office at this time were some books from the Workingmen's Institute Library, established by William Maclure at New Harmony, and extended to include other communities such as Terre Haute.

After the repeal of the township library tax law, however, the books in the Township Library were neglected, borrowed but not returned, and otherwise uncared for until the Township Library went out of existence. Titles which had been in this library included such modern-sounding ones as "Self Helps," "Races of the World," and "The American Housewife."

5-1-06

Association libraries represented another effort of the people to establish libraries. These were authorized by an act of the legislature in 1852, and in 1869 the Terre Haute Library Association established an office and reading room in the second story of the building at the northwest corner of Fifth Street and Wabash Avenue. Deloss M. Minshall was chosen president; John S. Beach, secretary, and J. Hollister Balding, in charge of property. Members paid four dollars for a one-year membership, but this attempt failed after two years.



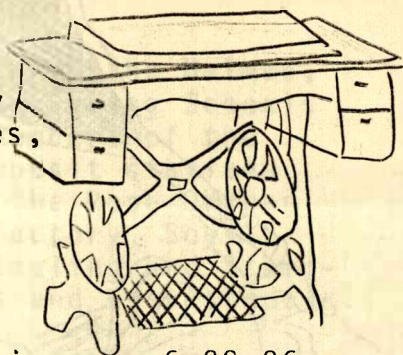
Societies also attempted to start libraries. The Ulyssean Library, according to William H. Wiley, Terre Haute School Superintendent, 1869-1906, had quite a collection of books, some of which were later put into the library of Rose Polytechnic Institute. In addition, the Concordia Society attempted to circulate good reading matter among its membership. Its small collection was turned over to the public library.

In 1879 the second Terre Haute Library Association was organized, with N. G. Buff, president, and Dr. J. P. Worrell, secretary, and many shares of stock were subscribed. Tax support for this effort even appeared possible when in the fall election 2,224 citizens voted for a library tax and 1,531 voted against it. With seventy-five per cent of the town in favor of a library tax, the Common Council debated the issue, but in the end the library proposal was defeated.

Following this defeat, many of the stockholders in the Association lost interest, but a number of enthusiastic women, such as Lucy C. Wonner, Leora Bowyer, Lizzie S. Byers, Elize B. Wiley, Mary Sydney Miller, Mary F. Reeves, and Ella Burt McKeen, retained the name of the Terre Haute Library Association and went on with plans for a subscription library. This library was housed at 624½ Wabash Avenue, with Mrs. Lucy Wonner serving as Librarian. Men were not invited to belong to this Association, though they could contribute money and books, or read.



In 1880 a law was passed authorizing school boards of Indiana to levy a tax for library purposes, and in 1881 Terre Haute school trustees made use of this law.



In the succeeding year they purchased the property of the subscription library, securing 1,140 volumes to form a nucleus for the public library. The new free public library was then moved to 709½ Wabash Avenue. In 1896 the Universalist Church at 119 North 8th Street was bought to house the growing collection. Mrs. Wonner had continued as librarian until 1894, when she resigned and was succeeded by Miss Leatha Paddock.

In the first year of operation on North Eighth Street the number of books increased to 4,048 and the money available from taxation amounted to \$5,583.79. The Board of Trustees appointed a committee, composed of Elizabeth S. Byers, Anna V. Lakin, William C. Ball, William S. Roney, and Dr. Joseph Richardson, to assist the librarian "in elevating the tone and character of the reading done throughout the city," according to the manuscripts left by Mr. Wiley. However, after six or eight years, this type of committee was abandoned due to a community sentiment that the library was pitched on a plane "above the popular taste and requirements."

At the beginning, a small catalog with alphabetical listing of about twenty-six subjects containing titles and authors of books was published. The pamphlet, which also held the rules and regulations governing all phases of library activity,



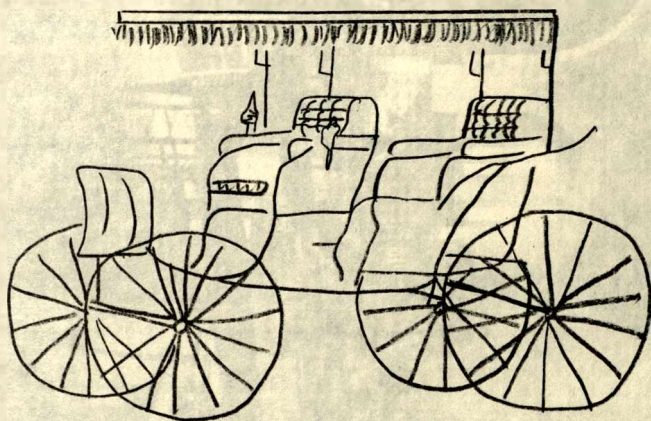


4-28-06

was revised on alternate years. It was sold to the public at cost, but between revisions supplements were issued and distributed free of charge. When the library had been in operation about ten years, the librarian prepared a new classification of the books, pamphlets, and periodicals on a broader basis and more in detail, and this classification remained in force until the adoption of the Dewey system in 1898. Professor Arthur Cunningham, Librarian of the Indiana State Normal School Library, was employed to direct the installation of the Dewey system in cataloging the 12,000 books in the collection at that time, and to advise the management during the first half of the school year, 1897-98.

With the construction of a complete card catalog, only a fiction list was now issued, and the library announced that each patron would be allowed to draw two books at a time, providing that only one was fiction. The open shelf system was continued, despite predictions from some critics that it would mean "speedy ruin."

In 1904 the libraries at the Hulman, Rea, Collett, Montrose and Deming Schools were taken in charge by members of the public library staff. Deposit stations were also established at the Rose Orphan Home, Mewhinney's Candy Factory, Boys' Club rooms, Columbian Enameling and Stamping Works, Ross, Voorhees and Hook schools.







TERRE HAUTE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
119 N. 8th Street (Old Universalist Church Bldg.)  
1896-1906





MRS. EMELINE  
FAIRBANKS  
1821-1894

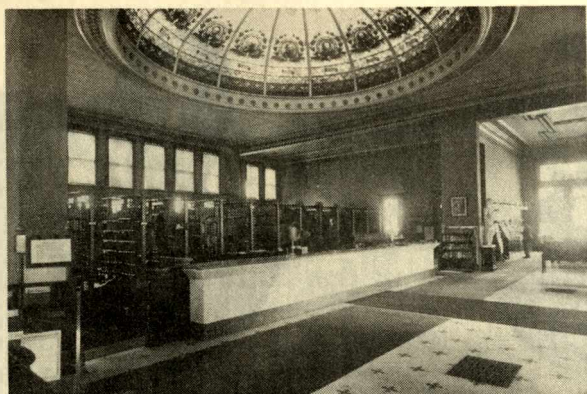


MR. CRAWFORD  
FAIRBANKS  
1843-1924



EMELINE FAIRBANKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
222 North 7th Street  
August 11, 1906

*Then . . .*



LOBBY

1906



READING ROOM

(Now the Reference Room)



CHILDREN'S ROOM

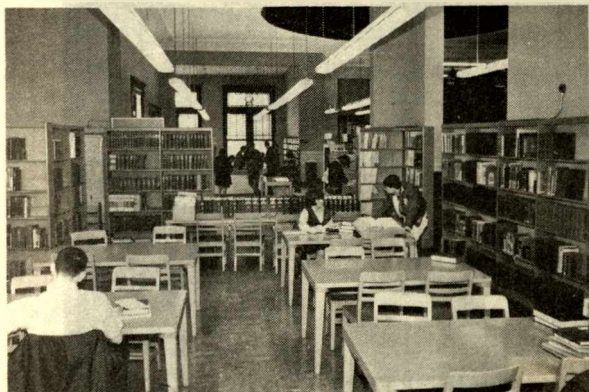
(Now the Browsing Room)



*Now . . .*



LOBBY  
1966



REFERENCE ROOM



BROWSING ROOM

WEST TERRACE HAUTE BRANCH





AMERICANA ROOM



CHILDREN'S ROOM



BOOKMOBILES



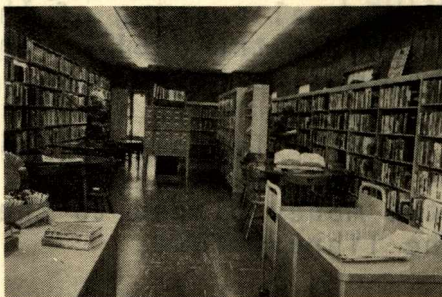
NORTH TERRE HAUTE BRANCH



SOUTH BRANCH



MEADOWS BRANCH



WEST TERRE HAUTE BRANCH



1906-1966

The public library was now firmly established, and in 1906 the 19,801 volumes were moved into the present building built for this purpose, at Seventh and Eagle Streets, by Mr. Crawford Fairbanks, a prominent Terre Haute businessman and philanthropist. Mr. Fairbanks had offered, as a memorial to his mother Emeline, to erect and completely furnish a suitable building for a library if the City of Terre Haute would provide the site.

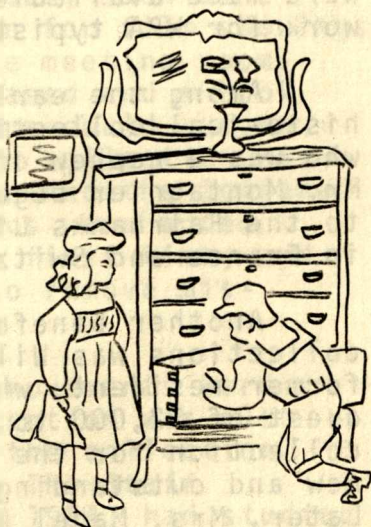
Some problems arose from the fact that the title of the property was in the name of the Civil City, while the library was owned and controlled by the School City. A Common Council ordinance settled the situation by giving a longtime lease to the School Board, with provision that the Civil City be released from responsibility for necessary repairs to the property.

A reception from 7:30 to 9:30 on the evening of August 11, 1906 announced the formal opening of the library building to the public, and on Monday the Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library was "open for regular business." The old building on North 8th Street was sold for \$6,500 and the money placed to the credit of the library fund.



After the first year of operation in the new building, a printed summing up of the year was made in "The First Annual Report of the Emeline Fairbanks Memorial Library," by Mrs. Sallie C. Hughes, Librarian. It listed the trustee officers as Oscar G. Derry, president, Thomas M. Kehoe, treasurer, and Adolph Neukom as secretary. Miss Grace E. Davis, Miss Florence P. Crawford, Mrs. May C. Dodson, Miss Minnie A. Connor and Miss Edna Neukom were assistants to Mrs. Hughes, the librarian. Miss Emilie Katzenbach was substitute, and the custodian was David Harris.

In addition to reporting on the work in circulation, catalog, juvenile, reference, reading, and school departments, the report also showed the addition of a rental collection of current fiction, a separate Children's room for the first time, and the beginning of story hours as new services begun after the move into the new building. Another new feature introduced was the Civic League bulletin, where pictures were placed of "both the attractive and the disreputable spots in the city," as well as a list of books dealing with civic improvements.



4-16-06

By the time of the ninth annual report in 1915, these activities were thriving and a number of clubs were meeting regularly in the library. These included the Saturday Circle, Art Section, Hawthorne Club, Drama Club, and three Normal societies. A one week course of lectures was held by L. M. Rogers of the National Theosophical Society, at which time a Theosophical club was formed.

An interesting notation accompanying the statistics on books discarded in the year of 1914-15 added that "many of the discarded books were those destroyed on account of Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever and Smallpox."

Mrs. Sallie C. Hughes served as Head Librarian until her death in 1927, when Miss Florence Crawford was appointed to the position. Under Miss Crawford's direction many genealogies, diaries, cemetery records and other local histories were made available. She planned this work for WPA typists and workers.

Among the earliest patrons of historical collections was Harry Montagnier, who was a nephew of Crawford Fairbanks. Mr. Montagnier began sending rare books to the Fairbanks Library, (when he was in France and Switzerland.)

Another benefactor of special collections was William Ross Teel, a former resident, who left a special bequest of \$2,000 to the Americana collection for the purpose of acquiring new and outstanding titles as published. Later, Mrs. Mabel Puffer Martin willed \$1,000 to the library to purchase books for the genealogy section.

The depression of the 1930's caused a drastic curtailment of library service and collection development, but once it was over library services slowly began to expand again.

In 1951 Miss Crawford retired and Miss Hazel E. Bungard was appointed Acting Librarian. Stillman K. Taylor became Head Librarian October 1, 1953, and Miss Bungard became the library's Reader's Adviser until her retirement in 1963.

A bookmobile began service in 1955 and many physical improvements were made in the Fairbanks Library building to modernize both its appearance and service. The circulation desk was moved to the south side of the front entrance, equipment purchased for the Indiana Room and shelving bought for the Browsing Room (formerly the Reading Room).

New equipment was added, such as a sound projector and screen for film showings, and folding chairs for the meeting room. The book budget was increased and a book return box added so patrons could return books at the curb. A film collection was started and the library joined the Indiana Film Circuit. Phonorecords were added to the collection for the first time, and the catalog was revised to remove misleading designations.

By 1957 physical improvements were still continuing, but attention was also being given to adjusting the collection to meet community needs. The Staff Association, organized in 1954, had studied "How are we meeting community needs?"



and had found that the community was turning more and more to the public library for facts and information, while buying paperbacks and using television for recreation.

The highlight of 1958 was the opening of Meadows Branch, first public library branch to be established in a shopping center in Indiana. The addition, of a second bookmobile provided service to twenty-three school and eight adult stops on a two-week schedule.

The Children's Room was moved to the basement and the Indiana collection into the former Reference Room. The Reference Room was then relocated in the Browsing Room and the Browsing Room moved into the former Children's Room to complete the moving cycle initiated to provide better coordinated library service.



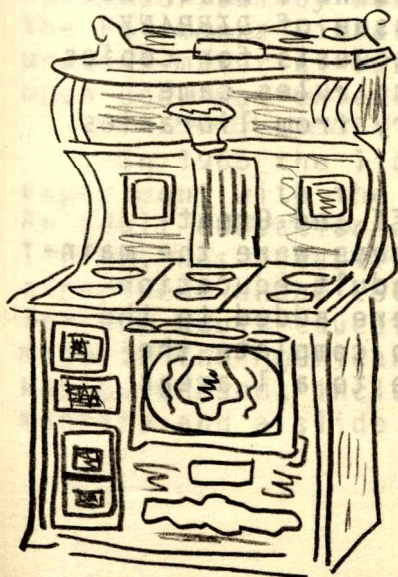
5-2-06

During the next few years other improvements, additional services, and new equipment were added. A separate catalog was made for the expanded Young Adult program; Technical Services Department was moved to the basement and new public rest rooms were added. The first Staff Institute was held to train staff in adult education methods and techniques. In-service education became a major project to train staff, and an orientation program was inaugurated for new staff members.

The big news of 1960 for the Fairbanks Library was the vote of Vigo County citizens to adopt the recommendations of the Vigo County School Reorganization Committee for a one-county school system. With this change in administration on the board level came the reorganization of the Fairbanks Library from a city library governed by five trustees to a Vigo County library system governed by seven trustees.

Consequently, in 1961 public library service was extended to the entire county. Bookmobiles extended their stops into the county; West Terre

Haute Branch was opened and South and North branches were readied for opening early in 1962. Library Services Act funds provided 11,942 additional books for the new branches and the bookmobiles serving the county. Scott and McLean Branches were



closed as public library branches and reopened under the administration of the schools as school libraries.

1962 saw the establishment of county-wide service in Vigo County on a firm basis. The library also began cooperative service to Knox and Sullivan counties for ordering and processing of materials.

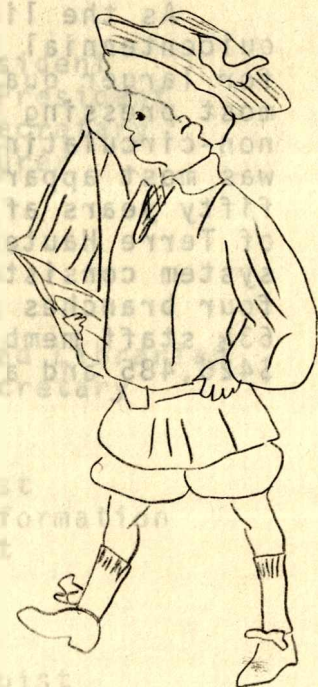
In the years following, library service continued to grow. A second Microfilm reader was purchased; new glass and aluminum doors were installed at Main; Gaylord charging machines were added to all the system and the position of Reader's Adviser was changed to Information Services Librarian.

A new four-section card catalog was purchased for the main building and all the card catalogs in the system were refiled with new simplified filing rules compiled by the Technical Services Department. A by-product of this project came after the rules were described in the April 15, 1965 issue of *LIBRARY JOURNAL*. Hundreds of requests for copies of the Terre Haute filing rules came from all over the country from libraries of all kinds.

Great Books, Distaff and Great Decisions discussion groups were the mainstays of the library's adult education program. Story hours were added to the bookmobiles' programs to complete the offering of this service to all areas of the system.



A Library Improvement Reserve Fund was established to provide a building fund reserve for new buildings. Growing pains had caused a need for more adequate quarters for almost the entire system. Meadows Branch was moved to larger quarters in Meadows Shopping Center, but this type of move was not available to the other parts of the system not housed in shopping centers.



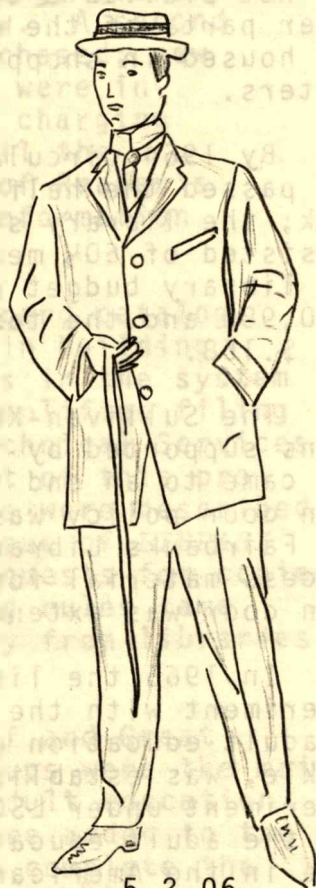
By 1964 circulation had passed the half million mark; the library staff consisted of 60½ members; the library budget was \$310,980 and the tax rate was \$.158.

4-25-06

The Sullivan-Knox-Bicknell demonstrations supported by the Library Services Act came to an end in 1964, but the open door policy was still in operation and the Fairbanks Library continued to order and process material for Knox and Sullivan. The open door was extended to Clinton.

In 1965 the library began its third experiment with the use of Federal funds. An adult education office, under Mr. Jimmy Tinkle, was established as a two-year experiment under LSCA funds. An office for the adult education specialist was made in the Americana Room and new equipment was purchased, including a multilith machine and a slide and filmstrip projector.

As the library began the Ses-  
quicentennial year in 1966, the need  
for larger quarters appeared to be the  
most pressing problem. Heavy demand for  
non-circulating materials and services  
was most apparent. One hundred and  
fifty years after the founding  
of Terre Haute, its public library  
system consisted of a Main Library,  
four branches and two bookmobiles,  
63½ staff members, a budget of  
\$426,485 and a tax rate of \$.205.



5-2-06

ALL SKETCHES ARE FROM  
ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE  
TERRE HAUTE TRIBUNE  
FOR DATES INDICATED.

#### LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

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Dr. Iverson C. Bell, Vice President  
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Miss Dorothy M. Thomas, Secretary

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Mrs. Evelyn Fallowfield, Bookmobile Librarian  
Mr. Robert St. John, Bookmobile Clerk-driver  
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Mrs. Berneice Thomas, Clerk

### SOUTH BRANCH:

Mrs. Margaret Lightfoot, Librarian  
Mrs. Mary Barnhart, Clerk

### MEADOWS BRANCH:

Mrs. Lillian Laybold, Librarian  
Mrs. Louise Barrick, Assistant  
Mrs. Mary Mathes, Clerk  
Miss Nikki Dupies, Assistant Clerk

### WEST BRANCH:

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Mrs. Edris Landers, Clerk

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Mrs. Frances Boyd, Assistant  
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Mrs. Julia Thiede, Order Clerk  
Mrs. Hazel Hamblen, Processing Clerk  
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Mr. William Tanner, Assistant  
Mrs. Trillis Kutchan, Janitress  
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